

comes, it is as if it had dropped immediately from heaven. God delays the answer that it may be the more beneficent when it comes. The stream is made to turn and wind, that it may receive contributions from every valley which it passes, and all to flow more largely into the bosom at last. God's plans ripen slowly, that the fruit may be the richer and mellow. Hence it is that the royal munificence of his bounty knows no limits at last. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Fifthly, Prayer has a most beneficent reflex influence upon the character. We are unwilling that the obligation of prayer should be made to rest primarily on such a basis. But, an independent basis being secured otherwise, it is indeed most delightful to trace the blessed influence which prayer produces upon the character. We must first show how it shines in its own light, and then it is pleasant to observe how its light is reflected from off the heart and temper, which it beautifies and adorns. Prayer, like virtue, should not be courted for its mere indirect consequences; but, when sought for its own sake, it brings with it a thousand other blessings.

Combine these five considerations, the two presumptions in the feeling and state of man, the two direct proofs in the duty of prayer, and the appointed connexion with its answer, and the accessory in the results that follow, and we have a foundation on which prayer may rest, and from which it can never be dislodged.

These observations on the subject of prayer hold true in regard to all other spiritual ends contemplated by God. Whether the mere observer of physical nature notices it or no, we doubt not but the earth is meant to help the woman, that the physical is used to promote the spiritual, which is to be the last and greatest of all the historical developments evolved by God.

in our world. But the discussion of this subject would conduct us into a far higher field of inquiry than the common providence of God; and we wish it to be understood that in these sections we are treating of the ordinary dealings of God in the world, and not of the supernatural government of his Church.